

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF UTAH COUNTY, UTAH
PUBLIC WORK SESSION
May 27, 2020
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PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF UTAH COUNTY, UTAH

WILL HOLD A PUBLIC WORK SESSION
IN THE COMMISSION CHAMBERS - ROOM
1400 OF THE UTAH COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
100 East Center Street, Provo, Utah
May 27, 2020 - 03:00 P.M.

Board members may participate electronically at will, with the anchor location as stated above.

~WORK SESSION MINUTES~

Commissioner Ainge (Chair), Commissioner Lee and Commissioner Ivie in attendance.

Others in Attendance: See attached Attendance Sheet

(Meeting Began: 3:03 pm)

PRAYER/READING/THOUGHT: **Not done**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: **Not done**

WORK SESSION

1. DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED CUTS TO THE COUNTY COMMISSION BUDGET, AS WELL AS POTENTIAL CUTS IN OTHER DEPARTMENTS OF UTAH COUNTY, AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

-Nathan Ivie

COMMISSIONER IVIE – EXPRESSED THAT DUE TO REVENUE DECLINING AS A RESULT OF COVID-19, IT WOULD BE PRUDENT FOR THE COMMISSION TO START HAVING PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS ON WHERE CUTS ARE GOING TO NEED TO BE MADE WITHIN THE COUNTY BUDGET TO ENSURE THE BUDGET STAYS BALANCED THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE YEAR AND CONTINUE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE CITIZENS IN DELIVERING ESSENTIAL SERVICES.

LOOKED TO HIMSELF FIRST IN THE AREAS THAT CAN CREATE SAVINGS. THE COMMISSION HAS GONE THROUGH THE COMMISSIONER’S BUDGET TO LOOK FOR AREAS OF POTENTIAL SAVINGS. MEETING TODAY IS TO SHARE SOME OF THOSE AREAS AND ALSO HAVE SOME PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS OF OTHER AREAS IN THE COUNTY TO LOOK FOR POTENTIAL SAVINGS.

HAS WORKED WITH RALF BARNES (HUMAN RESOURCES) ON THE COMMISSION BUDGET REGARDING BENEFITS. ABLE TO FIND SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS THERE AS WELL AS SAVINGS THROUGH CUTTING

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BOOKS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS, STATE OF THE COUNTY AND OTHER EQUIPMENT SUPPLIES. ALL 3 COMMISSIONERS RECEIVE A CELLPHONE ALLOWANCE THAT CAN BE CUT. LOCAL EDUCATION TO BE CUT. SPECIAL DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET LINE ITEMS AND TRAVEL DUE TO COVID-19 CAN GET SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS THROUGH CUTS FROM ALL DEPARTMENTS. THROUGH THOSE ITEMS, HAVE FOUND ABOUT \$115,000 IN SAVINGS (APPROXIMATE 10% CUT) IN THE COMMISSION DEPARTMENT.

RALPH BARNES, HUMAN RESOURCES - EXPLAINED A BASIC OVERVIEW. THE COUNTY AS A WHOLE, IS AHEAD BY APPROXIMATELY 3.7% ON COST OF BENEFITS WHICH IS APPROXIMATELY \$120,000.

DANENE JACKSON, CLERK/AUDITOR'S FINANCE OFFICER- IN 2019 (GENERAL FUND), THE COUNTY SPENT 40,700 IN TRAVEL AND IN THE SAME TIME PERIOD IN 2020 IT WAS \$6,700.

COMMISSIONERS DISCUSSED DIFFERENT MEASURES TO LOOK AT FOR CUTS TO BE PREPARED FOR WHAT MAY COME IN THE MONTHS AHEAD. WILL PUT THE COMMISSION DEPARTMENT CUTS TOGETHER TO TAKE TO DEPARTMENT HEAD MEETING ON MONDAY TO BEGIN THE CONVERSATION FOR CUTS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

DEBORAH HARRICK, RESIDENT - WHY NOT USE THE DATA AND MAKE A PERCENT DECISION.

COMMISSIONER IVIE – COMMENTED THAT WE DON'T HAVE ALL THE DATA YET AND THIS IS A BEGINNING DISCUSSION WHERE THE COMMISSION IS TRYING TO FIND THE BEST PATH FORWARD WORKING TOGETHER IN SHARING IDEAS TO BE ABLE TO COME UP WITH THE RIGHT SOLUTION RATHER THAN HARDLINING WITHOUT ALL THE FACTS AND DATA.

COMMISSIONER AINGE – WHEN IT COMES TO LEADERSHIP, THERE ARE SOME SITUATIONS WHERE USING THE 10% ACROSS THE BOARD MIGHT MAKE SENSE. WE ARE NOT SURE WHERE THE DECLINE IS AT THIS POINT AND SO WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO SET A RESPONSIBLE BUDGET. PART OF THAT IS MAKING SURE THAT WE HAVE COVERED THE MOST ESSENTIAL SERVICES.

JULIE BLANEY – STATED THAT SHE REPRESENTS 23,000 PEOPLE IN UTAH COUNTY THAT SIGNED A REFERENDUM TO PUT THE QUESTION ON THE BALLOT CONCERNING THE 67% TAX INCREASE. BUSINESSES ARE OPERATING AT ABOUT 30-40%. CONCERNED FOR PROPERTY TAXES IN THE SPRING.

COMMISSIONER AINGE – WE ALL IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, EXPERIENCING THE PAIN. THE COUNTY DOES HAVE A NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS THAT HAVE SEVERE CUTS WITH HEAVY LAYOFFS AND FURLOUGHS, SO THE COUNTY IS EXPERIENCING THE LOSS.

COMMISSIONER IVIE – FUTURE TAXES IS A CONCERN FOR ALL. WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE CLERK/AUDITOR'S OFFICE SO THAT THOSE IN NEED AT THAT TIME CAN APPLY FOR THE TAX RELIEF THAT IS AVAILABLE TO THEM.

DANENE JACKSON, CLERK AUDITOR'S OFFICE - COLLECTION RATE HAS DROPPED ABOUT 9%.

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TOM SAKIEVICH, SPANISH FORK – TALKED ABOUT OPINIONS ON LAYOFF AND SUGGESTIONS.

COMMISSIONERS AND TOM SAKIEVICH DISCUSSED TAX DETAILS.

CAMERON WAGA, RESIDENT - INQUIRED AS TO WHAT THE COMMISSIONERS FEEL THE FUTURE PLANS ARE FOR TAXES.

COMMISSIONER AINGE – STATED HE WANTS TO RUN A SURPLUS NEXT YEAR WHILE REDUCING THE PROPERTY TAX RATE. WE ARE IN A UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT NOW – WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HOME VALUES ARE GOING TO DO THIS YEAR. IN AN HISTORICALLY NORMAL ENVIRONMENT, IF THERE WAS A SLIGHT INCREASE IN OVERALL PROPERTY VALUES IN THE COUNTY, THE TAX RATE WOULD AUTOMATICALLY GO DOWN. BASICALLY, THE SAME THING AS SAYING WE’RE NOT GOING TO GO THROUGH TRUTH IN TAXATION. WHEN WE BUILD THE RESERVE CAPACITY AND WE BUILD THAT SURPLUS THEN WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO NOT NEED INCREASES FUTURE. WE CAN LET THAT RATE CONTINUES TO DECREASE. DOES NOT THINK IT IS A SUSTAINABLE TAX POLICY TO LET THE PROPERTY TAX RATE DECLINE YEAR OVER YEAR. WE LET IT HAPPEN FOR 23 YEARS WHICH IS KIND OF UNHEARD OF EVEN IN THE STATE OF UTAH. PERIODICALLY YOU HAVE TO DO A MINOR ADJUSTMENT BUT FEELS THAT FOR THE NEXT YEAR AND YEAR AFTER, CAN GET BY WITHOUT DOING A TRUTH IN TAXATION PROCESS.

COMMISSIONER IVIE – FEELS THIS IS SOMETHING THAT ALL 3 COMMISSIONERS ARE VERY COMMITTED TO – DEVELOPING MORE MULTI-YEAR BUDGETING PRACTICES WITHIN THE COUNTY. HAVE WORKED WITH AMELIA GARDNER POWERS (COUNTY CLERK AUDITOR) WHO IS A STRONG PROPONENT OF THIS ALSO. OBVIOUSLY ON PROJECTIONS, THE FARTHER YOU GET OUT, IT’S GOING TO BE A LITTLE LESS ACCURATE BUT IT GIVES YOU A BETTER DIRECTION ON WHERE YOU’RE GOING RATHER THAN LIVING PAYCHECK TO PAYCHECK SO TO SPEAK. EXPLAINED THE STATE LAW CONCERNING PROPERTY TAX. TRUTH IN TAXATION IS A STATE LAW.

COMMISSIONER AINGE – AGREED WITH COMMISSIONER IVIE ON THE EXPLANATION, BUT CLARIFIED THAT WHEN NEW HOMES ARE BUILT, WE DO GET A GROWTH FACTOR ON THE NEW HOMES, SO THERE IS SOME ADDITIONAL REVENUE THAT COMES FROM THAT, BUT WITH EXISTING PROPERTIES, THE RATE CONTINUES TO GO DOWN.

COMMISSIONER LEE – BEFORE A CERTAIN TIME (NOT SURE OF THE DATES), PRIMARILY THE COUNTY RELIED ON PROPERTY TAX SO THE BURDEN THAT WAS MET WAS MET PRIMARILY ON PROPERTY TAX. WHEN THE STATE SHIFTED AND WE SHIFTED TO SALES TAX AS WELL, THE BURDEN ON PROPERTY TAX WAS DECREASED BECAUSE SALES TAX TOOK UP PART OF THE BURDEN THAT PROPERTY TAX WAS HOLDING UP ALL ON ITS OWN. IF WE’RE RELYING ON THE BURDEN OF BEFORE AND NOW, WE NEED TO HAVE, NOT JUST A CONVERSATION ON PROPERTY TAX, BUT SALES TAX AS WELL.

DANENE JACKSON – THERE IS NOT A STANDARD FORMAT/FORMULA FOR SALES TAX PROJECTIONS. THE COUNTY TAKES INTO CONSIDERATIONS WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT. GOING INTO 2020 THERE WERE SOME PREDICTIONS THAT THERE WAS GOING TO BE A SCALE BACK IN THE ECONOMY. THIS WAS BEFORE ANYTHING WAS KNOWN ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS.

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WHEN ESTIMATES WERE DONE FOR 2020, TOOK A VERY CONSERVATIVE APPROACH WHICH IS A GENERAL GOOD BUDGETING TECHNIQUE. ONCE WE RECEIVED OUR FINAL 2019 SALES TAX DISTRIBUTIONS, THE 2020 SALES TAX REVENUE ENDED UP AT ABOUT 2.2% INCREASE FOR THE COUNTY OPTION TAX. IN TIMES WHEN THERE HASN'T BEEN THAT EXPECTATION, WE'D PROBABLY DO A 4-5% INCREASE IN SALES TAXES.

KATHERINE HIGHMARSH, RESIDENT – STATED SHE WAS PART OF THE REFERENDUM. STATED THAT 6,000 NAMES WERE CUT FROM THE REFERENDUM STATING THAT THEY WERE NOT VALID. HAD ISSUES BACK IN 2016 WHEN HE HUSBAND WHO HAD PASSED AWAY 15 YEARS PRIOR, WAS STILL LISTED ON THE VOTING RECORDS FOR YEARS. WHAT LIST IS USED TO VALIDATE THE SIGNATURES?

COMMISSIONER AINGE – STATED THAT THIS HAS BEEN CHALLENGE IN THE PAST. IN OUR CLERK/AUDITOR'S DEPARTMENT, AMELIA POWERS HAS REALLY SHOWN A LOT OF LEADERSHIP AND HAS FIXED OF ISSUES THAT WE HAVE HAD IN THE PAST. IT HAS TAKEN SOME INVESTMENT IN TECHNOLOGY AND PEOPLE TO BE ABLE TO GO THROUGH THESE PROCESSES IN UPDATING VOTER ROLLS. VERIFICATION IS EITHER A MANUAL PROCESS OR A PROCESS THAT RELIES ON TECHNOLOGY. IT REQUIRES SOME INVESTMENT.

AMELIA POWERS GARDNER, UTAH COUNTY CLERK/AUDITOR – CONCERNING:

- **HUSBAND WHO HAS PASSED AWAY 15 YEARS AGO: WHEN SHE CAME INTO OFFICE IN JANUARY OF 2019, THE VOTER LISTS IN UTAH COUNTY HAD NOT BEEN ACTIVELY UPDATED SINCE 2012. ONE OF THE VERY FIRST THINGS DONE WAS UPDATE THOSE LISTS AND THEY ARE NOW UPDATED WEEKLY THROUGH DEATH CERTIFICATES RECEIVED THROUGH THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT.**
- **THE 6,000 SIGNATURES THAT DIDN'T GET VERIFIED – THIS WAS EXPLAINED IN THE LETTER THAT WAS SENT TO JULIE BLANEY. THOSE SIGNATURES DID NOT FOLLOW THE PROCESS THAT WAS SET FORTH BY THE LEGISLATURE. SHE AGREES THAT THE PROCESS IS INCREDIBLY ONEROUS AND IS COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH THE LEGISLATURE TO FIX THE PROCESS MOVING FORWARD. HAS REACHED OUT TO THE BILL SPONSOR AND IS HOPING THAT IN THE NEXT LEGISLATIVE SESSION THAT CAN WORK WITH THE PEOPLE THAT WORKED ON THE REFERENDUM AND HOPEFULLY CHANGE THAT PROCESS TO MAKE IT BETTER.**

EVEN IF 100% OF THE SIGNATURES WERE VERIFIED AS VALID, THE REFERENDUM STILL WOULD NOT HAVE MADE THE BALLOT. DIDN'T THINK IT WAS A GOOD USE OF TAXPAYER DOLLARS TO SPEND THE TIME TO CONTINUE TO VERIFY THOSE SIGNATURES THAT CAME OUT OF PROCESS BECAUSE EVEN IF 100% OF THEM HAD BEEN VALID, THE REFERENDUM STILL WOULD NOT HAVE MADE THE BALLOT. AS A FIDUCIARY OF THE TAXPAYER DOLLARS, COULD NOT SPEND ABOUT \$10,000 OF ADDITIONAL TAXPAYER DOLLARS TO VERIFY SIGNATURES THAT WOULDN'T HAVE HAD GONE TO COURT TO HAVE A JUDGE OVERRULE THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO HAVE COUNTED.

THERE WERE ALSO APPROXIMATELY 1,800 SIGNATURES THAT WERE HAD BEEN INVALIDATED BECAUSE THE SIGNATURES EITHER DIDN'T MATCH, OR THEY WERE NOT A REGISTERED VOTER OR THEY DIDN'T LIVE IN UTAH COUNTY. THAT BROUGHT THE NUMBER OF SIGNATURES BELOW THE THRESHOLD.

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AMELIA POWERS GARDNER, JULIE BLANEY AND JOSH DANIELS (UTAH COUNTY CLERK/AUDITOR'S OFFICE) DISCUSSED THE REFERENDUM INCLUDING STATE LAWS. AMELIA POWERS STATED THAT THE COUNTY FOLLOWED THE PROCESS THAT IS OUTLINED IN STATE LAW, THE PROCESS THAT THE STATE USES TO VERIFY STATE REFERENDUMS, AS WELL AS EVERY LOCAL REFERENDUM IN THE HISTORY OF THE STATE OF UTAH HAS FOLLOWED.

AMELIA POWERS AND JOSH DANIELS INVITED JULIE BLANEY TO COME BACK TO THE OFFICE AND GO THROUGH INACTIVE VOTERS (THOSE ARE COUNTED). THE RESULTS LETTER WITH DETAILS IS PUBLISHED ON THE WEBSITE.

LISA SHEPHERD, PROVO RESIDENT – THANKED AMELIA POWERS FOR HER HARD WORK AND FOR UPDATING THE VOTING REGISTER.

**COMMISSIONER LEE: MOTION TO ADJOURN
COMMISSIONER IVIE: SECOND
AYE: ALL IN FAVOR
PASSED: 3/0**

MEETING ADJOURNED

(Meeting Adjourned Time: 5:00 pm)

In compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, individuals needing special accommodations (including auxiliary communicative aids and services) during this meeting should notify Alice Black at (801) 851-8111 at least three days prior to the meeting.

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DocuSigned by:

Nathan Ivie

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NATHAN IVIE

Commission Vice-Chair

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:

Alice Black

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Deputy Clerk/Auditor